

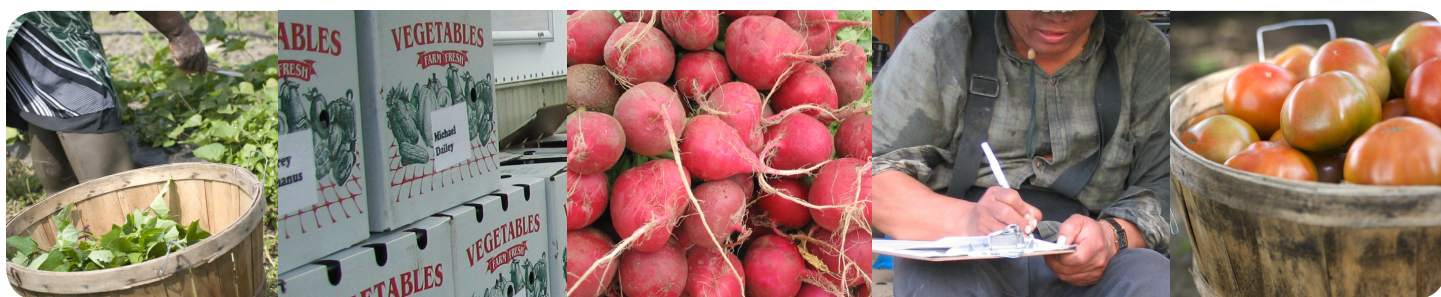
Quick Guide to



GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) are procedures designed by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to reduce the risk of produce contamination by pathogens on farms. Many wholesale and foodservice buyers now require that their suppliers undergo third party audits to verify that they follow GAPs. Otherwise, although still very important, these procedures are not currently mandatory.

GAPs focuses on anticipating food safety hazards and taking preventative steps before products leave the farm. This protects the public from consuming contaminated food, and it protects farm businesses from the economic consequences of foodborne disease outbreaks. Following GAPs can never eliminate the risk of on-farm pathogen contamination, but it does substantially minimize that risk.



GAPs Certification Requires Several Steps, Including:

- Developing a **food safety program** and writing a **food safety plan** that:
 - (1) evaluates potential sources of pathogen risk on the farm,
 - (2) explains steps and procedures the farm will take to reduce the risks of chemical, physical, and microbial contamination, and
 - (3) addresses how to respond if contamination occurs
- Keeping current **documents and records** that provide evidence of following the steps and procedures listed in the food safety plan
- **Undergoing an audit** of the operation that verifies observance of the food safety plan and compliance with Good Agricultural Practices

ON FARMS, FOOD SAFETY IS IMPORTANT

throughout the production process.

GAPs aims to minimize fresh produce contamination from pre-planting through post-harvest.



Major Sources of Contamination and Practices to Control Potential Food Safety Hazards Include:

Water Quality

- Potable water must be used for drinking, hand washing, washing harvested produce, washing containers used to hold harvested produce, and irrigation that comes in direct contact with the edible portion of a crop.

Manure and Municipal Biosolids

- Raw manure must be applied to soil at least 120 days before harvest; treated or composted manures or biosolids must have pathogens brought down to safe levels before application.

Worker Health and Hygiene

- Employees must follow proper hygiene practices, including washing hands before working or at any point upon returning to work, using clean toilet facilities with soap and potable water, and eating and drinking away from fields. Employees should only work in non-produce handling areas whenever they feel ill, particularly with diarrheal disease, and should avoid any contact with fresh produce.

Domestic and Wild Animals

- As much as possible, keep domestic and wild animals out of produce fields with fences, soil buffer strips, noisemakers, etc. After harvest, keep areas around packing houses clean and pest-free.

For More Information on
Good Agricultural Practices,
Check Out These Websites:

www.gaps.cornell.edu/

www.uvm.edu/~susagctr/?Page=gaphome.html



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